DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 821 FL 800 606

TITLE	Literacy for Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples: A National Strategy.
INSTITUTION	Metis National Council.; Native Studies and Applied Research, Inc., East Regina (Saskatchewan). Gabriel Dumont Inst.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of the Secretary of State, Ottawa (Ontario).
PUB DATE	[93]
NOTE	44p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Canada Natives; Educationally Disadvantaged; Federal Legislation; Foreign Countries; *Indigenous Populations; *Literacy Education; National Programs; Needs Assessment; *Policy Formation; Public Agencies; *Public Policy
IDENTIFIERS	*Canada; *Metis (People)

ABSTRACT

The condition of literacy programming for Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples in Canada is reported. Metis peoples are defined as Aboriginal People distinct from Indian and Inuit, descendants of the historic Metis, and descendants of Aboriginal Peoples who have been absorbed by the historic Metis, all of whom share a common cultural identity and political will. The Non-Status Indian Peoples are those of Aboriginal ancestry who are not defined as Indian within the criteria of the Indian Act and are not part of the Metis community. The research was designed to identify successful approaches and programs presented in existence and to discover gaps and needs. Data for the study was obtained through a literature review and telephone interviews with three separate groups: personnel in literacy programming for provincial and territorial governments; representatives of Metis and non-status Indian organizations; and personnel in literacy programs deemed successful for Aboriginal peoples. This report consists of the following parts: the Literacy Campaign of Canada as it affects this population; defining literacy in general; defining literacy for a literacy strategy for Metis and Non-Status Indian People and communities; characteristics of successful programs; and developing a national strategy. The report concludes with recommendations for: a national forum to discuss the issues; a literacy campaign; an education act; Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education policy; support structures; needs assessment; a literacy coalition; development of a research base; and formation of a National Literacy Council for Metis and Non-Status Indians. Appended are the names and addresses of individuals and organizations surveyed. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education) (LB)

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LITERACY FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES:

A NATIONAL STRATEGY

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by

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of
Native Studies and Applied Research Inc.

and

The Metis National Council

FL900606

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This document is a condensed version of a final report on a national survey funded by the Department of the Secretary of State.

WHO THE STUDY IS ABOUT

This study reflects the condition of literacy programming for Metis and non-status Indian peoples in Canada. The participation of the Metis and non-status Indian organizations across Canada made this document possible.

The Metis People of Canada

The Metis National Council defines Metis as:

- an Aboriginal People distinct from Indian and Inuit;
- descendants of the historic Metis who evolved in what is now western Canada as a people with a common political will;
- descendants those Aboriginal Peoples who have been absorbed by the historic Metis

(The Metis Community comprises members of the above who share a common culture identity and political will.) Our homeland encompasses the three prairie provinces, northeastern British Columbia, parts of the Northwest Territories and parts of the Northern United States (Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota).

The Non-Status Indian Peoples of Canada

Those people of Aboriginal ancestry who are not defined as Indian within the criteria of the Indian Act and are not part of the Metis community.

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THE STUDY

Introduction

The following strategy for Aboriginal literacy was developed by the Gabriel Dumont Institute in collaboration with the Metis National Council. The purpose of the research was to provide recommendations for action in the areas of policy, program and strategies to meet the literacy needs of Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples.

Research

The research was designed to identify successful approaches and programs presently in existence and at the same time to discover gaps and needs. Telephone interviews were conducted with three separate groups: personnel in Literacy programming for provincial and territorial governments; representatives of Metis and Non-Status Indian organizations; and personnel in Literacy programs deemed successful for Aboriginal peoples. Literature pertinent to Literacy and Aboriginal peoples was used to provide a framework for the findings from the surveys.

THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN AND THE METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES

Metis and Non-Status Indian people are not being well served by the Literacy Campaign in Canada.

Metis and Non-Status Indian people are students in programs but their particular needs have not been recognized nor addressed. The input of the Metis and Non-Status Indian organizations has not been sought nor have programs designed and proposed by them been supported. Metis and Non-Status Indian community representatives who have tried to become involved are very frustrated.

Questions arise such as "What kind of access do Metis and Non-Status Indian people actually have to programs for literacy?" "Who guarantees that they have access?" "What mechanisms ensure that they get access?"

Structures and Processes in Literacy for Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples: The Issues

Lack of Knowledge of the Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples

Lack of Knowledge

It became clear in speaking with officials involved with literacy programming that the distinctions between the needs of Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples were often confused with needs of Status Indian peoples. Governments are much more aware of the Indian communities and cultures in their jurisdictions than the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples.

No Formal Structures for Involving the Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples

No Involvement

Provincial departments contract services with and to reserve communities and the federal government easier than with Metis and Non-Status Indian communities and organizations. In most jurisdictions there is no formal mechanism in place to contract directly with Metis and Non-Status Indian organizations for the delivery of programs.

Lack of Effective Communication Links Between the Literacy Units and the Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples

There is little direct communication between the Metis and Non-Status Indian organizations and education authorities. There is a high level of frustration on the part of the Metis and Non-Status Indian organizations because Literacy is seen as one more area where programs were designed to meet the perceived needs of members of the Metis and Non-Status Indian communities but were designed, developed and implemented without any involvement of the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples.

No Communication

Lack of Policy Development

No jurisdiction in Canada has a policy regarding literacy programs and Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples even though many have policies with regard to the education of Aboriginal peoples in elementary and high school or post-secondary education. In most literacy units there appeared to be no knowledge of the existing policies and therefore, these policies had not been adapted to the needs of the literacy programs. In the Northwest Territories, British Columbia and the Yukon specific reference was made to pertinent reports, legislation and policies that impinged on the work of the literacy unit.

No Program Policy

Lack of a Fiscal Policy For Literacy Programming for Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples

No Fiscal Policy

There are no funding structures in place to address the long term literacy needs of Metis and Non-Status peoples. Funding is on a program by program basis. Many of the spokespeople from organizations of Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples stated that federal funding had been essential in their province to give impetus to literacy programming.

Lack of Structures and Procedures for the Involvement of Metis and Non-Status Indian People in the Evaluation of Programs Aimed at Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples

No Involvement In Evaluating Programs

For the most part the procedure used in the delivery of literacy programs is community-based. Community organizations apply for funding. The funding request is approved or rejected on the criteria set at the provincial level. There is no mechanism in place to involve members of the Aboriginal community in the decisions about funding. There is no process for involvement of the Aboriginal community in evaluating proposals, monitoring programs, making suggestions as to appropriate materials or giving feedback on the outcomes of projects. There are very few Aboriginal people on staff in the projects identified. No where does there appear to be a formalized acceptance of the right of Aboriginal peoples to control their own programs nor a commitment to Affirmative Action in the hiring policy for programs.

Jurisdictional Complications in the Delivery of Literacy Programs

Jurisdictional Complications

In many provinces, Community Colleges or other agencies deliver literacy programs. These institutions are autonomous and their relationships with Aboriginal communities dictate how programs are delivered to communities.

Literacy Councils and the Metis and Non-Status Indian People's Needs

Literacy Councils and Aboriginal Needs

Literacy Councils are part of the literacy network. In some jurisdictions, these organizations have supported the Aboriginal people. In other jurisdictions, the Aboriginal people have had little involvement or influence within the Councils. The Metis and Non-Status Indian community expressed concern that the development of Literacy Councils might not be the best way to address the problems of literacy for the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples.

Lack of Philosophical and Pedagogical Foundation for Programming

Little research or evaluation data guides programming for Aboriginal literacy. There is no policy about: Mother Tongue Literacy; English as a Second Language; or Aboriginal control in literacy programming. There is a recognized lack of appropriate materials and curricula. There is no attempt to apply research already existing in learning styles, teaching styles, orality, writing processes and Aboriginal peoples.

Literacy—What Do People Mean?

No Consistent Definition

People from different provincial and territorial governments, Metis and Non-Status Indian organizations and literacy programs, have a variety of definitions for "literacy". The definition sets the parameters of a program, determines the characteristics of the clientele, influences staffing decisions, dictates content and presupposes outcomes. Agreement on what is meant by "Literacy" is essential to meeting the needs of the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples.

DEFINING LITERACY

Let's start with a dictionary definition:

Literacy Defined

Literacy: The quality or state of being literate
Literate: 1. a. educated or cultured
b. able to read and write
2. being versed in literature
3. having knowledge and competence
(Websters Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1985, p. 697.)

This dictionary definition stresses the "cultural" aspects of literacy as well as the ability to read and write. It places a social value on being "literate". Literacy bestows upon the individual recognition for being knowing and skilled. A literate person possesses certain abilities, knowledge and awareness accepted as legitimate by society. Therefore, the main benefit of being literate is the entry into the cultural world of mainstream Canada.

Literacy and Culture

How does this definition relate to Aboriginal peoples? Ferdman (1990) states that cultural identity both derives from and modulates the symbolic and practical significance of literacy for individuals as well as groups (182). How does the cultural identity of Aboriginal peoples influence their literacy? Aboriginal cultures are non-literate cultures. Aboriginal languages have been, for the most, part preserved as oral languages. What is important to be remembered, is said. The Elders were and still are among other things, the keepers of the spiritual knowledge, the historians, legal advisors, counsellors, tellers of tales, moral teachers, medical researchers, and guardians of the corporate memory.

Non-Literate Not Illiterate

Those things that have to be known and skills that have to be learned within the community are transmitted through the teachings of the culture and the language. This knowledge is non-literate knowledge. This is the valued knowledge in Aboriginal communities.

> "We must not confuse being non-literate with being illiterate and label our Elders as unknowing because they are unread." (Christopher LaFontaine, Gabriel Dumont Institute)

DEFINING LITERACY FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Aboriginal Communities

The conditions surrounding issues of languages and literacy are very complex in Aboriginal communities and families. In many communities, very few adults would have a level of schooling higher than Grade nine. This conclusion is based on the history of Aboriginal education in Canada. Aboriginal peoples have had limited access to high schools. As a result most adults in Aboriginal communities would be classified as "functionally illiterate". What does this classification add to our understanding of the literacy needs in these communities?

A closer look at many communities shows that the "functional language" of the community is an Aboriginal language. Can we then say that those who cannot communicate in the Aboriginal language in this society are functionally illiterate?

Aboriginal Literacy

> "Research into Aboriginal literacy is showing that Aboriginal communities had high levels of literacy in their own languages. Cree, Ojibway, Kutchin, and Inuit individuals wrote diaries, poetry, letters, and autobiographies in their own languages". (Cecil King, (Odawa), Indian and Northern Education Program).

Contemporary researchers, (Shearwood, 1987; Berry and Bennett, 1989) demonstrate that there are a variety of literacies co-existing in Aboriginal communities. Unfortunately only the English essayist literacy has been given legitimacy in Canadian society.

Aboriginal Languages and World View

> "Each language has its own life, its own spirit and its instructions are to shape and carry our thoughts in the sacred paths given to its nation." (High Pine, 1976, 30).

Language structures our world. Our reality is not only relfected in the words but through the structures of the language itself.

Literacy in Aboriginal languages is a continuation of the cultural system of structuring the world.

Literacy and Aboriginal Languages

The English and French languages represent different systems for defining and describing the world. They incorporate a different value system and different structuring principles.

There is a spiritual connectedness between Aboriginal people and their languages. This places a burden on Aboriginal people who acquire other languages and literacies which begin to take over from their Aboriginal one. Many Aboriginal people see the loss of Aboriginal language use as symbolic of the loss of the values, practices and worldview that it embodies and a breach of faith with the Great Spirit.

Aboriginal Community Attitudes Towards Languages and Literacies

Aboriginal Resistence to Literacy

Statistics would indicate that Aboriginal peoples in Canada have a high resistence level to literacy programs. Resistence to English or French literacy among Aboriginal peoples may be assumed not only from the numbers that have remained "illiterate" but also, from the high drop-out rates in adult education programs. A study in northern Ontario in 1989, showed that the drop-out rates of Aboriginal students in adult basic education courses at Confederation College, Thunder Bay was 45% and in Sioux Lookout was 25%-30% (Keewatin-Aski Ltd., 1989, Response, p.4). Drop-out rates in northern Alberta range from an average of 25% in ABE programs in the northern region to a high of 80%. No studies have satisfactorily explained the high drop-out rates of Aboriginal peoples.

Factors which enter into the resistence of Aboriginal peoples to English and French language literacy are often deeply felt things such as loss of language, threat to cultural values, loss of identity, etc. which are not easily articulated nor likely to be reported to school officials.

Scollon and Scollon (1979) found that Athabaskans resisted becoming "literate" because of negative feelings towards the behaviour of English speakers. Athabaskans fully

understand that becoming English language literate is to become bicultural.

There is at the same time among many Aboriginal people, resistence to Aboriginal language literacy. Many believe that languages should only be taught in the home and community in the traditional oral way. There are those who feel that the oral traditions are destroyed when they are written down. The essence of orality is orality.

Orality and Literacy

In many Aboriginal homes and communities, the literate tradition exists beside a vibrant orality. All Aboriginal peoples of Canada have descended from oral cultures, where the communication is face to face. The Elders are the repositories of the traditions about every aspect of life. The traditions are very much woven into the language that is spoken in the community. There is a fear by many that the loss of language will result in the death of the culture.

Writing and the Oral Tradition

The sanctity of the traditions is considered to be incompatible with the written word. In many communities, Elders do not allow the traditions to be put into literate form especially in European languages.

It is important to understand the discomfort many Aboriginal peoples have with the written word. The written word is immutable. Many Aboriginal people feel that the invention of the written word has caused a "blind worship of the written word, that has denuded the spoken word of its power and sacredness." (Luther Standing Bear quoted in Lake, 1983, 134).

The oral tradition has different checks and balances than the literate tradition. The tenets of academic writing, such things as, logical conclusion, linearity, internal consistency, and quoting authority, come from the Western Intellectual Tradition. Such tenets are not part of the Oral Tradition. The process of writing oral traditions is fraught with the attempts of non-Aboriginal scholars to structure them into the "accepted" literary format, i.e. a story must have certain characteristics to be a "story".

Oral Traditions and Aboriginal Literacy

On the other hand, within Aboriginal communities there are those who believe that unless Aboriginal languages are written, the traditions written down and taught formally that the languages will eventually become extinct (Zaharlick, 1982, 44). The Aboriginal proponents of written language forms want to acknowledge that Aboriginal children are not learning the language and traditions at home, that they are learning English only and they want to stop that trend by instituting formal Aboriginal language literacy programs. These people passionately believe that Aboriginal literacy programs are the only way to preserve Aboriginal languages, cultures and traditions. The opponents to Aboriginal literacy programs feel just as strongly that Aboriginal language literacy programs will destroy Aboriginal languages, cultures and traditions.

Aboriginal Languages as Non-Dominant Discourses

Learning English/French to gain "Social Goods"

Aboriginal people are seeking to become literate to become part of Canadian society. Gee (1989) defines literacy in terms of the mastery of secondary discourse, which means learning another way of doing, being, valuing and believing. Some ways of doing, being, valuing and believing are given more value in society. These are called dominant discourses. English and French are dominant discourses in Canada.

The mastery of the dominant discourse brings with it the social "goods" (money, prestige, status, etc.).

Aboriginal languages are non-dominant discourses and they bring solidarity with a particular social network but not wider status and social "goods" in society at large (Gee, 8)

For Gee, teaching, reading and writing is teaching values and that for a person to acquire a dominant discourse he/she must take on values that may conflict with their community's values. Many Aboriginal peoples see the acceptance of English and French and the destruction of their own languages and cultures as two sides of the coin.

Many Aboriginal leaders have accepted the necessity of training their people in English language skills at the expense of language and cultural programming in an attempt to solve the pressing economic needs of their communities. Many Aboriginal communities have been split because of this. Many question the priority put on economic development if it results in the acquisition of a different set of values which conflict with the traditional values of the community and the loss of the Aboriginal language. Supporters of the economic imperative state that Aboriginal languages don't help Aboriginal people to get jobs, support themselves or to become part of the mainstream society. Their loss is regrettable but perhaps necessary for Aboriginal people to survive.

Literacy and Power

Literacy for What?

Much discussion and attention has been paid to the concept of literacy as empowerment. To acquire the ability to read and write is to acquire the power over your own life. This power is often assumed to bring greater social equality. Many are questioning these assumptions.

Literacy is hardly liberating if it is training Aboriginal peoples to stay in the positions already assigned to them in Canadian society. Literacy classes associated with employment programs in Aboriginal communities have often had the effect of training Aboriginal people to "Think rightly" for the job they are entering. In this way this literacy is assimilative rather than liberating in that it teaches the motivations, values and knowledges which are socialization for economic advancement and subvert the community-based values.

Literacy for Aboriginal people must be literacy for active roles in shaping their society. The questions to be asked of all programs must be "Literacy for what?", "At what price?, and "Who determines the answers to these question?"

DEFINING LITERACY FOR A LITERACY STRATEGY FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Any literacy campaign involving Aboriginal peoples must:

(1) Recognize the existence of a variety of literacies in Aboriginal communities;

(2) Recognize English-language literacy programming for Aboriginal peoples as cross-cultural experiences;

(3) Recognize the tensions between orality and literacy;

(4) Recognize that non-literate people have different language usage methods, concepts, and techniques than English or French writers do;

(5) Recognize that the teaching of essayist English is a narrow restricted training in English literacy;

(6) Recognize that literacy is not new to communities and that the resistence in the present context is related to the system which has forced English or French language literacy at the expense of the Aboriginal languages;

(7) Recognize that there is resistence to literacy within Aboriginal communities based on the threat to cultural identity posed by the assumption of the values of an outside culture bound within the English or French language literacy;

(8) Recognize that there are serious differences of opinion within Aboriginal communities on the costs and benefits of English or French language literacy;

(9) Recognize the rich heritage of language experience both oral and literate that Aboriginal peoples possess;

(10) Recognize that issues of English or French language literacy cannot be considered in isolation from issues of Aboriginal language retention, retrieval and renewal.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Control by Aboriginal Communities

There is no acceptance in Canadian society at the present time of the right of Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples to control literacy programming geared towards members of these communities.

There is no equivalent of the "Indian Control of Indian Education" policy formally followed by government agencies in working with Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples in Canada.

"Let the federal government formulate a fiscal policy and a general policy and we will do the rest." (Audreen Hourie, Manitoba Metis Federation)

"The fundamental issue is control. Policies and programs at all levels are developed by autonomous units somewhere with no contact in the community." (Brad Thompson, Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association)

"Only through direct funding to the Metis community itself will the needs be properly assessed, identified and appropriate programs be devised." (Doreen Richardson, Metis Association of Alberta)

"There is a need for a coherent, integrated plan for Metis self-determination beginning with an act of Parliament establishing principles of Aboriginal self-government in all educational programming funded by the federal government." (Larry Desmeules, Metis National Council to the Standing Committee in Aboriginal Affairs, House of Commons, June 20, 1990 - Hearings on Aboriginal Literacy.)

Involvement in the Total Process

"If you want to develop programs for us, involve us from the outset so that the delivery ensures that it meet our needs." (Brad Thompson, Ontario, Metis and Aboriginal Association)

Aboriginal Educational Institutions

"The traditional institutional structures do not neet the needs of Aboriginal people and are reluctant to contract with Aboriginal organizations and communities. We need our own institutions and structures to support and legitimize these institutions: fiscal policies; contracting arrange-

ments; policies that support and promote them; policies that support cultural knowledge and approaches." (Audreen Hourie, Manitobal Metis Federation)

Relevant Curriculum for Metis and Non-Status Indian People

"The major gap as I see it in literacy programming is the lack of teaching Metis people within the contect of our culture. The necessary component to overcome this problem is the lifting of the suppression of the Metis people and the proper history of the Metis reflected in Canadian history books. Any literacy program, in order to have some semblance of success, must give the recipient some self-identificaiton as to the program being offered." (Norman Evans, President, Pacific Metis Federation)

Culturally relevant materials related to Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples are missing in literacy programming right across the country.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

Only two programs for Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples were identified. These programs were visited and their personnel interviewed. Other programs which were named by both Aboriginal people and government officials were contacted. The following are characteristics of succesfull programs gleaned from the survey.

1. Control, support, and promotion from the local Aboriginal community.
2. Flexibility
3. Curriculum generated by the program itself and geared to the culture, language and interests of the participants.
4. Confidence building activities.
5. Support systems geared to student needs - Metis counsellors for Metis students.
6. Non-traditional teaching approaches: e.g. computer-assisted; developmental drama; oral history projects, etc.
7. Warm, informal learning environment.
8. Caring instructors.
9. The ability and desire to deal with the real life problems of students as they occur.

DEVELOPING A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR LITERACY FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES

Presently lip service is paid to the needs of Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples in the area of literacy programming in most jurisdictions although there are notable exceptions. It became increasingly apparent to us in the course of this study that if present structures, processes and strategies continue, the needs of our people will never be addressed. This is unacceptable for we have a young, quickly growing, increasingly disenchanted population.

The right of Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples to demand programs that both meet our particular community needs and the requirements of the larger Canadian society must be recognized. We ask the federal government to join with us in a passionate fervent crusade towards maximizing the human resource base in the Metis and Non-Status Indian communities of Canada.

RECOMMENDATION ONE:

A National Forum

THAT A NATIONAL FORUM BE HELD IN THE NEAR FUTURE FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES TO DISCUSS AND DEBATE THE ISSUES OF LITERACY FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES

Participants in this study representing Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples stated that they would appreciate the opportunity to discuss, debate and share information with other Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples and organizations about the issues around literacy. A national forum based on the results of this report was suggested as a good next move.

RECOMMENDATION TWO:

THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IN COLLABORATION WITH MEMBERS OF THE METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES DEVELOP A LITERACY CAMPAIGN SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE

METIS AND NON-INDIAN COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS.

A Literacy Campaign for Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples

Such a campaign must be based on agreed upon governing principles and operating formulae. It must include a ten to twenty year mandate with a fiscal arrangement which supports the activities required. It must specify goals and dates for meeting those goals. It must outline the relationships among the governments and the Aboriginal organizations, educational institutions, communities and individuals.

Recognition of the complexities of the issues of literacy for Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples must be made explicit within the campaign plan and the responsibility of programmers to provide appropriate programming must be made perfectly clear.

RECOMMENDATION THREE:

THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PASS THE METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES' EDUCATION ACT TO DEFINE THE PARAMETERS FOR THE FEDERAL FUNDING OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES.

An Education Act

Federal legislation governing education is not unknown in Canada. The Canadian government has taken legislative action in the past to provide impetus for action in the area of education. The legislation supporting vocational education is a case in point.

The fact that the federal government funds so many educational programs for Aboriginal peoples puts some responsibility on the federal government to provide the laws to govern the expenditure of those funds. Presently, programs are functioning with little evaluation, few guidelines and very little accountability to either the government or the Aboriginal people.

One of the fundamental principles that must be built into the delivery systems of educational programming to Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples, is the obliga-

tion of the program deliverer to meet the requirements of the Metis and Non-Status Indian community. Canada needs a legislative mandate which legitimizes this position similar to Sections 315a in the U.S. Adult Education Act which regulate the conditions under which programs are provided for adult Indian peoples. We propose the following model:

The Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples' Education Act

The Act would state the following principles:

(1) that the Government of Canada accepts the UNESCO position that literacy is a basic human right, accessible to everyone;

(2) that the Government of Canada accepts that the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples of this country have not been served well by the educational institutions of this country;

(3) that the Government of Canada accepts the right of the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples to be involved in decisions relating to educational programming for them;

(4) that the Government of Canada promotes the development of educational institutions for Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples;

(5) that the Government of Canada accepts the view that changes in the educational services offered to the Aboriginal peoples are urgently needed to meet the challenges of the 21st Century;

The proposed Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples' Education Act would regulate the expenditure of all federal monies designated for any and all educational initiatives directed towards Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples. The Act would govern monies paid out through federal departments, Crown Corporations, cost-sharing agreements with other governments, agreements with corporations and any other contractors. The Act would stipulate that monies shall not be

expended unless the Aboriginal people for whom the educational initiative is intended have adequate involvement in the planning and development of the project and that continuing involvement is an essential part of the operation and evaluation of the project. Applications from Aboriginal educational institutions, community groups or organizations will get priority in the funding of educational programs.

The Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples' Education Act would specify the funding available for each year to meet the goals of the Literacy Campaign and other national education strategies. Fiscal policy would be established and the priorities for spending would be set in consultation with Aboriginal groups. Management Committees composed of representatives from Aboriginal groups would monitor the progress in meeting the predetermined goals.

Institutions currently receiving federal funds for programs offering education to Aboriginal peoples will have a specific period of time to bring their programs in line with the national agenda or risk the loss of funding. Aboriginal organizations would be given the responsibility of managing programs which fail to restructure to meet the requirements of the Act.

The Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples' Education Act is envisaged to provide a vehicle whereby the cultural and linguistic differences within the Aboriginal community of Canada will be promoted and preserved. Further, it is meant to give Aboriginal peoples and institutions the maximum amount of flexibility in assessing local needs and developing programs and materials to meet those needs.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR:

THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ADOPT THE CONCEPT OF ABORIGINAL CONTROL OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO THE METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES OF CANADA

Aboriginal Control of Aboriginal Education Policy

Research supports the view of when Aboriginal peoples control their own programs more effective programs result. Community controlled, designed, initiated, developed and delivered programs are the most effective. A broad definition of community is needed to meet the needs of all the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples. At one level, community-based means discrete identifiable geographic centres. Community-based, at another level of meaning applies to the larger community of the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples and the regional, provincial or national institutions which are in place to serve the needs of the community as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE:

Support Structures

THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ESTABLISH SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR THE EDUCATION OF METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES

Fiscal Support for Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples

A comprehensive long-range fiscal plan is needed for the educational future of the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples. Structures must be created whereby the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples have access to federal funding to promote programs to meet their needs. What is the federal framework for financing strategies related to Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples? What is the Federal funding formula used by the federal government in supporting the needs of Indian and Inuit peoples? What is the formula used to provide for the Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples?

When the jurisdictional responsibilities are sorted out, then the structures must be built to allow Metis and Non-Status Indian communities to contract needed services.

Funding for Literacy

Literacy campaigns need to have a ten to twenty year life span to be successful. This means that a serious literacy campaign for Aboriginal peoples in Canada needs a budget that is ongoing and long-term. This funding must be based on realistic statistics that identify the clientele in various types of learning situations. Successful programs must be funded on a continuous basis. Innovations and experimental approaches planned in conjunction with Aboriginal communities should be encouraged but not at the expense of existing programs that have proven themselves to the Aboriginal people.

Funding for the production and dissemination of local materials should be an expected expense as part of Aboriginal literacy programs.

Cultural Support Systems

There is a need for a comprehensive fiscal plan for the creation, development, renewal and maintenance of a support network for Literacy among the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples. Literacy Campaigns must be passionate and all encompassing to be successful. Support for literacy takes many forms. In the Metis and Non-Status Indian communities support is needed for Aboriginal media: radio, television, newspapers, computer software, and books in Aboriginal languages and in English and French. All types of creative expression should be fostered in Aboriginal communities from the recording of the Elders on tape to theatrical productions and poetry readings.

An Elder who has a story to tell should know that within the community the story can be recorded, translated (if necessary), transcribed, reproduced and placed in reading and study programs of Aboriginal adults and children.

Successful literacy programs use approaches that meet the students "where they are" using culturally relevant materials-often transitional materials from Abo-

riginal cultural and linguistic experiences. It is hard to find materials that portray the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples' perspective, history and realities. We need support to develop Michif Cree, Michif Saulteaux and Michif Sioux as well as materials to tell our story.

Student Funding

Student funding must be part of the fiscal support system. Metis and Non-Status Indian students trying to become literate are funded inadequately. Not only is the system of programs complex but the funding available is a disincentive to "becoming literate". "Literacy at what cost?" is a question asked by Aboriginal students.

RECOMMENDATION SIX:

Needs Assessment

THAT A NATIONAL LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES BE UNDERTAKEN

It is critical that meaningful statistics on the needs of the Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples of Canada be collected. Census data are not only inaccurate but the categories used to denote Aboriginal ancestry are not helpful. A national picture of these Aboriginal people is needed. We need to know things such as: educational levels as related to Mother Tongue; Home language as related to educational levels; numbers of people in training programs; people's aspirations; comparisons of characteristics of people receiving programming and those not, etc. Basic questions such as, " How many people are there in need of programs?"and " What types of programs do people need?" must be answered to be able to assess what infrastructure must be established to support a successful Literacy Campaign for Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples.

We know that the need for literacy is great among our people. We need to know how great it is to prepare for the future. How could the institutions of adult educa-

tion currently in place possibly cope with the demand if all of our people needing and wanting literacy appeared at their doors?

Assumptions are made about the characteristics of Metis and Non-Status Indian communities. A lot of assumptions come from people having some knowledge of the Indian people of the area and their history, culture and experience. In some cases these assumptions are partially correct. In other cases, they do not fit our situation at all. We need specific factual information to describe our position to those who make decisions based on their knowledge of us.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN:

THAT A NATIONAL LITERACY COALITION FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES BE FORMED MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES OF CANADA WITH THE MANDATE TO MANAGE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Literacy Coalition

It is critical that the Literacy Campaign for Metis and Non-Status Indian Peoples be managed by Aboriginal people. A national coalition is necessary to provide a management committee to supervise activities undertaken on behalf of the Metis and Non-Status Indian communities. Liaison and communication with similar organizations working on the literacy campaign for the Indian and Inuit peoples must be maintained.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT:

THAT RESEARCH BE UNDERTAKEN TO ESTABLISH PHILOSOPHICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CRITERIA FOR THE FOUNDATION OF CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES

Research Base

It is obvious that programs for Metis and Non-Status Indian peoples are set up without benefit of research or proven experience which provides criteria for judging their value. We are tried of being experimented

upon. We propose that a research project be set up which incorporates culturally relevant materials and culturally relevant approaches to provide the foundation for future programming.

RECOMMENDATION NINE:

National Literacy Council

THAT A NATIONAL LITERACY COUNCIL FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES BE FORMED TO BRING TOGETHER PRACTITIONERS WORKING IN THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN FOR METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIAN PEOPLES

Networking, information sharing and support must be provided to programs. Literacy Councils have been very effective in some areas in bringing concerned people together. Presently, there is a need for Metis and Non-Status Indian peopleS themselves to share their experiences and develop strategies and action plans to meet their particular needs.

APPENDIX A

Steering Committee for
A Comprehensive Literacy Strategy for Aboriginal Peoples

Metis National Council Representation
Ron Rivard, Executive Director
Larry Desmeules, President, Metis Association of Alberta

Gabriel Dumont Institute Representation
Christopher LaFontaine, Executive Director
Donovan Young, Director, Research and Development

Principal Researcher: Cathy I. Littlejohn, Ph.D.

APPENDIX B

List of Government Officials and/or Literacy Advocates Interviewed

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Adult and Continuing Education,
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John Joe Sark,
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Advanced Education and Manpower,
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Ministry of Native Affairs,
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Northwest Territories
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Education,
Government of the NWT,
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Yukon
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Whitehorse, Yukon
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Co-Ordinator,
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APPENDIX C

List of Aboriginal Organizations and Affiliates Surveyed

Metis National Council
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Metis Association of Alberta,
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Metis Society of Saskatchewan,
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Native Council of P.E.I.,
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Charlottetown, P.E.I.
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New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples' Council,
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Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association,
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Dene/Metis Co-ordinating Group,
Dene/Metis Negotiating Secretariat,
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The Pacific Metis Federation,
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APPENDIX D

Programs and/or Program Deliverers Surveyed

Journey's Adult Education Association
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Brandon Friendship Centre Literacy Program
303 - 9th Street

Brandon, Man. R7A 4A8
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Malecite Literacy Worker,
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Literacy Project
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On-Campus Program
SIAST/Native Services Division,
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Friendship Inn Literacy Project,
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Saskatoon, Sask.,(306) 242-5122

Inuit Literacy Program
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and Jan Woodford(709) 922-2158

Project Word Power
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Contact: Mary Louise Fournier(403) 668-8000

Native Language Institute,
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STRIDE
Literacy Attainment for Natives
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Northwest Territories
Arctic College,
Yellowknife, NWT.,
Contact: Mark Cleveland, Pres.(403) 920-6306
Bill Stapleton

Lovesick Lake Native Literacy Alert,
Burleigh Falls, Ontario
K0L 1K0(705) 654-4222
Contact: Pearl Parkin
Site Visit

OMA Local #5 Literacy Project,
Sharbot Lake, Ontario
K0H 2P0(613) 279-3251
Contact: Carol Pepper
On-Site Interview

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